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BOOK REVIEWS

Education: A First Book. By EDWARD L. THORNDIKE. New York: Macmillan, 1912. Pp. 292.

We have long needed—and still need—for students just beginning their studies in education an introductory book that would exhibit in bold outlines the broad fundamental aspects and problems of education. Many books under various titles have recently appeared which attempt to perform this service. But unfortunately for us, each partially fails for one reason or another—incompleteness in the survey, disproportion of elements, equality of emphasis on specific and general, oversight of the social milieu, failure to recognize individual differences, or some special bias, academic, psychological, or biological. Professor Thorndike's book is the latest contribution to the list.

After a preliminary eight pages on the meaning and value of education, he divides the problems of education into five groups: (1) the aims of education; (2) the raw material or subjects of education, by which he means the individuals to be trained; (3) the means and agents of education, by which he refers to teachers, books, appliances, buildings, grounds; (4) the methods of education; (5) the results of education.

Under the aims of education, he shows first how values depend upon the power to satisfy human wants, proximate or ultimate. With this as a basis he then discusses the various aims: happiness, utility, service, morality, perfectionism, natural development, knowledge, mental discipline, culture, skill. Reason is shown to be superior to custom in the choice of aims.

In the section on the material for education, there is first a discussion of certain general facts, laws, and relationships: the fact that the individual always finds himself within some specific situation, to some selected element or group of elements of which he must make response; intellect and character are due to intelligible causes; the physiological basis of human nature, especially the neurological; the varieties of human nature, due to sex, to remote ancestry, to near ancestry, to chance variations, and to degree of maturity. He then discusses the original nature of man: his unlearned tendencies, his individualistic and social instincts, his original interests and play, together with the possibility of using all these things in the process of education. And finally, he discusses the learning process as looked at psychologically: the laws of habit formation, the selective activities of attention, the improvement of practice, and the possible transfer of the results of practice.

In the discussion of the means of education, he considers the educative effect of everything with which the individual comes into contact; the knowledge that is of most worth; the relative values of the studies, and the basis on which they are to be measured; the problems relating to the election of studies; the arrangement of studies into sequences and correlations; the relative efficiency of men and women teachers; and the relation of personal to textbook teaching.

In the section on the methods of education, after making clear the possible variety in the methods that may be employed, he takes up for brief consideration the following topics and methods: methods of forming habits; methods of intellectual analysis; verbal versus realistic methods; inductive methods; expressive methods;

telling and showing; questioning and developing methods; the method of discovery; methods in moral education; and finally, teaching pupils how to study.

In the section on the results of education, he discusses the effects of both formal and informal education, showing that the effect is individual and transitory, not affecting the heredity-bearing germ-plasm. Thorndike's methods of measuring writing and composition, and the methods of Rice, Stone, and Courtis are presented to illustrate accurate methods of measuring educational results.

The final section of the book is devoted to a consideration of the general status of education in the United States at the present time: the student body, age and number at the various levels of progress, length of training, retardation, elimination, selective screening of the mass, and ratings; the teaching body, sex, quality and quantity of training, experience, salaries, and public esteem; the organization of the curriculum of the various grades and classes of schools; and finally, the fiscal aspects of American education.

All these matters are covered within the space of 281 pages. The well-informed specialist when he would write a general treatise is so overconscious of each of the multitudinous details which every teacher must know that he simply cannot persuade himself to leave any of them out, even though this is necessary for showing the broad fundamental aspects in heavy outline. The result reminds one of those ancient etchings of landscapes in which leaf is separated from leaf as clearly as tree is separated from tree. General proportion demands restraint in the use of details, and inequalities in emphasis.

The book appears to be meant for education within a social vacuum. The tremendous significance of modern social movements for education, their bearing upon educational purposes and aims, upon the raw material of education, upon differentiation in the work, upon the reorganization of the studies and the textbooks, upon the vital training of teachers before and during service, and upon standards of measuring results, appear to be so negligible as scarcely to require mention. A beginner's book that does not portray the fundamental social relationships of education in clear, strong outline is sure to work harm by giving a false initial impression of the place and purpose of education in the general human economy. The first general impression should, it would seem, furnish all the central nuclei about which all later ideas in the field might be associated. It should furnish the ground-plan that is never to be changed in the genesis of one's professional mental content. In this ground-plan, certainly the social relationships must not be slighted or omitted.

J. F. BOBBITT

An Elementary English Grammar. By ALMA BLOUNT and CLARK S. NORTHUP.
New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1912. Pp. xi+264. 12 mo. 60 cents.

The authors of *An Elementary English Grammar*, Alma Blount, of the Michigan State Normal College, and Clark S. Northup, of Cornell University, have succeeded as well as anyone before them in accomplishing the important feat of writing an interesting and scholarly grammar. To single out matters for specific praise in this book is easy. In the maze of grammatical terminology the authors have threaded their way circumspectly. There are only a few terms to cavil at. In the exercises given, the material is extraordinarily simple, direct, and vital. Pupils working through the exercises under the guidance of even uninspired teachers having no love for grammar would surely understand the fundamentals on completing the book. The "additional